LENA
AND OTHER POEMS

CONWAY E. CARTWRIGHT

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by

Hugh Anson-Cartwright

Gwynneth Joan Gwis
Wishing her many happy
years to come

May 27th 1958.

Some of
Your Grandfathers Poems
chiefly written when a
Student in Trinity College
Dublin
Ireland

LENA:

A Legend of Niagara;

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

CONWAY E. CARTWRIGHT.

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LENA: (1)

A Legend of Niagara.

One summer eve, at day's declining,
Pensive, 'neath shading boughs reclining
On couch of moss I listless lay,
Wiling the fleeting hours away.
Through burnished portals in the west (2)
The alch'mist sun retires to rest;
Close wraps, around his glowing breast,
A cloak of sombre cloud;
And, passing slow in smiles away,
Retreating waves his magic ray:
Straight, from his misty shroud
Forth-starting, at that spell of might,
Rise pillared shafts of golden light,

With ruby chapiters crowned:
From corbells white, faint drap'ries green,[3]
With purpling fringes, float between;
And mouldings, tinct with rosy sheen,
The far horizon bound:
Sapphire the dome which spans it o'er.
Beneath, Ontario's waters lie,
Reflecting, in their glassy floor,
The shifting blushes of the sky:
The glowing structure, fairy-reared, as fleet
As fancy's dream, in glory stands complete;
Aerial temple! Beauty's fate portrayed!
Born, but to die!—unfolding, but to fade!

Slow dims the pile;—its waning splendors peep,
Through showers of pearly dew, that softly fall,
In phantom curtains, from Night's noiseless hand;
Whose mystic touch Creation soothes to sleep,
And, cradling Life on slumber's velvet pall,
Silence enthrones, as monarch of the land.
The breezes die;—the lake lies calm;—
The Indian poplars breathe in balm;—

But murmuring low each rebel rill
Pursues its winding way;
As childhood, from his wanton will
Debarred, will muttering stray,
Till happier thoughts his fancy fill,
And, from his heart, a joyous shout,
In tuneful melody, rings out,
As fast he speeds to play—
The bat, on sluggish wing, flits by;
The marsh-frog's deep-toned lullaby
Falls on my dreaming ear;
And, on the mind, come thronging fast
Bright future hopes,—dark memories past,—
Tales of each by-gone year,—
And childhood's dreams returned again,
When Rev'rie's luring hand would trace
Those weird, yet beauteous, scenes, which grace
The legends of the Indian race;
Till, led by her, the forest glades
I roved, with blushing, dark-eyed, maids,
Or trod, with chiefs, the plain.

Then home these truant thoughts returning,
My mind aroused to restless yearning
For Fancy's hand, to rend away
"Her muddy vesture of decay,"[4]
And free the shackled soul.
'Tis done!—she speeds her rapid flight
On Fancy's wings, of shifting light,
Bedewed with rainbow dyes:—
Now cleaves the air, from pole to pole;—
Now floats, 'neath tropic skies;—
In Eden's bowers,
Beguiles the hours,
By musk-wind fanned, on couch of flowers;—
Then seeks the west,
The white-maned crest
Of mountain wave, her steed;—
O'er forests dark, then wings her way,
With lightning speed;—
Nor checks her course—nor brooks delay—
Until, Niagara's flood beside,
From high she stoops, to see,
Poured, from the hollow of His hands,

Who the whole Universe commands,
That wonderous tide.
Its seething waves, in tumult tost;—
Its silv'ry mists by rainbows crossed;—
Beauty—or Grandeur—all are lost
In vague immensity.(5)

"Hush! what sad dirge in murm'ring burden deep,
Peals, through the wood's dim aisles,
As, moan the wild wind's sighs round donjon keep—
Or long low strains of solemn music sweep,
Through grey cathedral piles?"
Thus mused I on,—by Fancy wiled,
Lingering along the mazy trackless round
Of thought, till sense beguiled
Saw from the cliff the headlong torrent bound.
Then, like a city's distant hum
At nightfall heard, those deep strains come,
Awing the listening ear;
Above, the blue skies coldly sleep;
Around, the pines in night-dews weep;
And slowly, o'er the rapt mind, creep

Heart-sinking thrills of nameless fear—
And dread foreshadowings of ill;—
As, stealing round, the darkness drear
Shoots to the trembling heart, a chill,
That checks the life-blood's flow:
How blest 'tis then, in such an hour!
What happiness! to know
That sound declares, a Father's power
To govern all below!
The self-same hand, that paints the flower,
Rules too that earthquake-throe.

But, not to savage ears the deep floods raise
Hoarse-sounding anthems to Jehovah's praise
In ceaseless song;—to them, that tone
Proclaims a gloomy spirit to preside,
Reigning in peerless majesty; his throne,
The boist'rous billow, the unfathomed tide;
Enrobed in mist, he summons, by that groan,
In turn, each trembling nation, to provide—
Doomed to his cold embrace—his bride,

Chosen by vote—the fairest maid,
Who sports beneath the dark pine shade—
The child of nature, wild and free,
Graceful, pure, beautiful, as she,—
Whose budding life has only been
  A happy thought—a fairy dream—
A fleeting glance of sunlight sheen—
  A bubble bright, down Time's swift stream
    Fast hastening on,—so soon to be
    Lost, in that waveless, tideless sea,
    That tranquil deep, Eternity.

Long reaped the summer's golden grain;
  Long faded autumn's dye;
Long ceased the youth o'er frozen plain
  On flashing steel to fly;
And, Earth awaked to life again,
  Beneath the genial sky;—
    From hawthorn spray,
    When warblers gay,
With glee proclaim the spring;

In Fairy bowers,
With wreaths of flowers,
When Time hath crowned him king;
When buxom Nature's budding smiles
Laugh out, in fragrant bloom;
And Zephyr's kiss the sense beguiles;
Then comes that day of gloom,
And, launched upon Niagara's tide,
Lovely, and young, the Spirit's bride
Drifts to her Curtian tomb.

The Legend

Then came that Eve:—and twilight grey,
In dewy mantle wrapped the scene,
Slow stealing from the sight away
The light, the sun's last quivering ray,
Shed o'er the forest green.
Then met the chiefs,—then round them slow
Gnome-reared a sable rampart grew,
Bounding, with denser wall, the view,
As brighter still, each moment, threw
The blaze its ruddy glow.

Hovering along the verge of gloom,
Eager to hear their chieftains' doom,
The humbler warriors roam;
As damnèd souls, on Fancy's sight
Loom, in the pale, blue, fitful light
Of Hell's phosphoric foam.
But long they wait,—still, round the fires,
In solemn conclave met,
Those martial chiefs, those ancient sires,
In silence give, in silence get
The wisdom-shedding calumet. (6)

Each on his neighbor turns, with questioning eye
"Will none the stillness break?
Will none arise?"
As silent all, as though the sacred lake (7)
They cleft, with swift canoe,
Fearing, by slightest sound, to wake
To wrath the Manitou.
For legends tell, that, o'er that tide
In death-like silence you must glide;

Speak but a word—your impious boat,
Those hallowed waves refuse to float.
At length, an aged chief arose,
Feebly and slow;—for, on his head
Depressed, and bowed, had Nature shed
The weight of ninety snows;
His gestures weak,—his accents low,
No more, his words, impassioned, flow,
In glowing strains, along;
No more, a star to youthful braves,
His crest of eagle plumage waves
Foremost the foes among.
Yet, of those younger warriors, none
Could boast such deeds as he had done.

The legend told, with faltering tongue;
His trembling voice, in silence, clung
To lips that cannot sound
The words of doom;—his heaving chest,
Arms clasped tight o'er his throbbing breast,
And, looks cast on the ground
His inward strife proclaimed;

And, when, at length, he utterance found—
At length, his sentence framed—
Faint from those pale lips shuddering came
One word alone,
By stifled groan
Half choked the sound,—'twas Lena's name.

Tearless he spake;—then sank to earth;—and they
Raised from the ground their chief's insensate clay,
Forth, from his feeble body, the strong soul
Had burst its way;
And, sternly battling for its proud control,
Had loosed the silver cord, and broke the golden bowl.(8)

Four chiefs of note Wyandotte bare,
To his lone tent, with silent care,—
His lonely tent,—for sun on sun
Had seen his children fade,
Dropped, from the old tree, one by one,
Like summer fruit decayed.—(9)

Still pondering o'er the doom, then spoken,
The crowd the stillness left unbroken;

Had but another name been breathed,
A nation's shout had shaken the dim wood,
And Passion from suspense unsheathed,
Had flashed, till quenched in blood;
But Lena!—Lena die?—that thought could tame
E'en those fierce spirits, in their wildest mood;
Apart her sire, Oronto, stood,
Well-known to Fame;
In council sage,—and, in the field
A single foot of ground to yield,
He held it shame;
Nor quailed before the searching eyes
On him each anxious gazer turned,
His glance of flame,
But, seeming pity to despise,
Cold as ice-mirrored planet burned,
As firm he muttered "Good!"

As mimic lightning flashed along (10)
The guiding wire, to nitr'ous grain,
Mine-stored, beneath some fortress strong,
Stern—frowning o'er the neighboring plain,

Wakes, in her breast, the slumbering storm;
And, sudden, from her rocky throne
She leaps, in wild, fantastic form,
To Heaven driven;—So, Lena's name alone,
With Love's strange magic power embued,
Long held those savage minds subdued—
For all had loved her—till Oronto's word,
Where sire gave place to chieftain proud,
Electric flashed along the crowd,
And their stern natures stirred,—
Then, quick aside each cumbering trapping flung,
In dances weird they plied each active limb;
But, when their shouts in discord wild had rung,
Waking each echo through the forest dim;
In softer strains, the dark-haired maidens sung,
Choiring the Manitou in wonted hymn.

Then low, the fairest of the train,
In mournful tones, began the strain—
Plaintive and slow,
Her accents flow.—

Thus sweetly sad, the murmuring,
When, sighing to Æolian string,
E'er passing on,
The lingering breeze is whispering,
"I must be gone."—
So faints her voice.—Then, rising wild and shrill
Through shrinking hearts the death song's echoes thrill,
As moaning for the fickle, wanton gale,
Shrieks to the wind the harp's regretful wail.

In tears the maidens cease their song;
Echoes awhile the strain prolong,
In measure sad and slow;
On Zephyr's wing they float awhile,
Hovering along each forest aisle,
In murmurs faint and low;
That spell had hushed the listening crowd;
Each timid maid, each warrior proud,
Now turned to see
How still—how firm—Oronto stood
In lonely majesty;—
As, some old monarch of the wood,

Grasped by the struggling squall,
Still calmly mocks his baffled foe,
Before whose arm of prowess fall
The forest-giants low.

But ill his troubled soul could brook
The wondering vulgar's pitying look,
For, those sad notes—in softly dying,—
Like summer winds o'er ice-brook sighing, (11)
Had slowly waked, to faint emotion,
That cold, calm spirit's frost-bound ocean;
And, as in some deep, land-locked bay,
O'er the smooth surface lightly play
Quick, fitful blasts,—then pass away,
And all again is still;
So, o'er Oronto's placid brow
Tremors slight are straying now,
Nor, e'en his iron will
Can, to his wishes, make them bow,
So great his load of ill.

He turned to go; before his stride, (12)
Like waving grain the crowd divide;
He passed them silent by.
Firm was his step;—his bearing high;
Like lightning flashed his eagle eye,
As, scorning sympathy,
He wandered forth alone.
But, when he reached the shady dell,
Embowered the home he loved so well.
As, phosphor, kissed by wanton air,
Bursts forth in flame;
With melting spell, o'er cold despair,
Sweet home-thoughts came,
Wringing from his stern heart a groan,
As pealed, in misery's piercing tone,—
In sorrows accents wild—
With deep-drawn sob,—with stifled moan,—
His cry, "My child! my child!"

'Twas a deep, dark, sequestered glen;
A brooklet wandered through;
Here, far removed from haunts of men,
Abode these fated two;
Around the lowly wild-flowers bloom
In dyes of every hue.
While cedars dark, and maples, wove
A leafy canopy above;
And, floating down through ether blue,
The straggling gleams the moonbeams threw,
Illumed the dark alcove;
And lit, with glances pale, the gloom,
Guiding Oronto's footsteps true.

With quickened step he onward trode,
Until he neared his rude abode,
Then checked his sounding stride,
And noiselessly his footsteps fell,
As, stealing to the side
Of her, the child he loved so well,

He stood in silence there,
With frowning brow—with lip compressed—
And hand tight clenched, and heaving chest;
And viewed the sleeper fair,
Till, one by one, came trickling slow
The large, round tears—as winter snow
Dissolves before the spring sun's glow.

Still Lena slept—but she had twined,
In strange, ill-omened glee,
A wreath, had she her fate divined,
A fitter could not be.—
That garland pale, of death-flowers, round (13)
Her ebon locks her fingers wound
Prophetic of her destiny;
And, to her seer-sire's eye she seemed,
As, on her form, the pale moon beamed,
A vision bright—
A shadow fair—
Some fleeting phantom of the night—
Or creature of the air.

And back to memory rushed the day
When his loved Calma, bleeding, lay;
A foeman's shaft had pierced her side,
And life was ebbing fast away;
Now fainter flows the crimson tide;—
Now fades her eye's bright ray;—
Now death has claimed Oronto's bride—
The grave her senseless clay.
And shall he also be bereft
Of her, his only stay—
His only tie to earth that's left,
Why he should there delay?

Sweet smiles round Lena's soft lips played;
She wakes to life once more;
A lovely flower,—doomed soon to fade,—
A green bough,—from the old oak cleft,
Where fresh it bloomed before.
Then slumber's seal her eye-lids left;
Each silken lash uplifted slow;
As if unwillingly displayed
The deep, dark orbs below,

Then languishingly fell;
But ope'd anew,
Unveiling glances bright to tell
Her sire's tall form she knew.
Quick to his loved embrace she flew;
Her arms around him twined.
And he his child as fondly clasped,
To his stern heart more firmly grasped,
As, on his breast reclined,
Fast, to that listening warrior bold,
In accents low her dream she told.

"To-day, I roved our woodland bowers,
With fearless step and free;
O'er me they wept, in dewy showers,
Till, diamond-gemmed, my crown of flowers,
Sparkled through the noon-tide hours,
A melting galaxy.

" Weary, at length, and tired with play,
I sought my wigwam home ;
On couch of sassifras I lay, (14)
Till slumber lured my thoughts away,
Far, in dream's wild maze, astray,
Through fairy lands to roam.

" Father ! I wandered, far away
To spirit-realms bright ;—
There deer, in countless numbers, stray
Through forests dark,—'mid blossoms gay,—
Time is there one glorious day,—
No clouds obscure the light.

" There beauteous birds, on Iris wing,
Float 'neath the pine-grove's shade,
Whilst the gay, warbling strains they sing,
Through leafy alcoves joyous ring,
Carolling eternal spring
In autumn ne'er to fade.

" For slumber-sent, there came to me
A fair form, in my dream—
A fair form, such as oft I see,
When, crowned with flowers in maiden glee,
Bending, by the bank, my knee,
I gaze into the stream.

" Father! she laid her hand on mine;
Her touch was cold and chill;
Airy her form, as beams that shine
Through the dark foliage of the pine,
Where o'erhead the boughs entwine;
Her voice like murmuring rill.

" 'Follow!' she said, distinct but low;
I could not but obey:
Her form more misty seemed to grow,
As, hand in hand, we silent go
Through the wood, with footsteps slow,
Until we reach the bay.

" But there, within the little bay,—
Where, o'er the pebbly strand,
The circling eddies heedless play—
A white canoe, unfastened, lay,
Reckless of the current's sway,
Unsteered by mortal hand.

" Yet, when we gained the pebbly strand,
Beckon'd my spectral guide;
And, swiftly came, at her command,
The fairy birchen bark to land;
Then within we took our stand,
And launched upon the tide.

" First, motionless we seemed to lie,
E'er yet we felt the tide;
Then, fast and faster swept we by
Isle after isle, more rapidly,
Lightning-winged we seem to fly,
As down the stream we glide.

"The laughing rapids kissed our prow,
In glee ——"
Why paused she then?
What gems Night's bosom now?
'Tis not the roving firefly's light!—
Gleam not the eyes of wolves so bright!—
Such beams the pine-wood torches throw!
It is! it is! their ruddy glow!—
And, hark! the tread of men
Now comes the glen along,
Measured and slow!
While faint,—at times in distance dying,—
From far the winds of night are sighing
The echoes of a song.

Sprang to his feet Oronto then,
Intently gazed he down the glen,
While Lena, trembling at his side,
To lure his look a moment tried,
By gentle wiles, in vain;

Then whispered, "'Tis my bridal train?
My brave Wenonga's there?"
Oronto turned, and sternly smiled,—
A smile of cold despair,—
He knew the band of doom.—
"Death will thy bridegroom be! my child!
Thy bridal couch the tomb!"
He said, and clasped her to his heart,
One fond embrace before they part,
And vanished in the gloom.

Fixed Lena stood—into the night's obscure
Bending her eager gaze, as though
She hoped, with serpent eye, to lure (15)
Some fluttering omen of her coming woe
From out its shade;
And, by that aid,
From Fate's yet hidden scroll to read,
In the dark Future's dim, mysterious page,
The yet-to-come, unalterably decreed.
Then Pride and Fear engage

In contest, for the empire of her mind,
The victor, pride;—and, when arrive the train
Of warriors stern, and maids; they find
Lena, composed and calm; resolved, no stain
Of craven fear shall dim the dazzling fame,
The glory-halo of Oronto's name.

With smiles she greets the crowd,—they pause
A moment, wondering at her courage high,—
Then racks the ear of night their hoarse applause,
And, starting at the sound,
Flushed Lena's cheek,—bright flashed her eye—
Proudly she glanced around—
And firm her step, as, sweeping graceful on,
She led the way
Along the path, until before them shone,
In wanton play,
Breaking the flood of golden light,
With sparkling plumes of silver bright,
Those crests of spray;
The kelpies white, of fairy theme,
Sporting adown Niagara's stream,
Beneath the moon's pale ray.

There stopped the band; with silent care they drew
From close concealment, where the cedars grew
Kissing the stream, the sacred, white canoe,
And launched it on the tide;
While, dreading lest the bark away should float,
Two chiefs of note
Knelt by its side.

With measured steps and slow the maids began
The serpent windings of the mazy dance;
But swifter, swifter still their circles ran,
Till but one orb of flashing white you scan,
As by they glance.
Sudden they stopped, as if had met their view
That fabled head, (16) each gazer turned to stone,
So still they stood:
Forth from the wood
Advanced a queenly maid, alone;
Dazzled the eye her robe of rainbow hue,
And thus she sang, in gay and warbling tone—

"Blossoms gay to thee we bring,
Brightest flowers of early spring,
Lend, lend thine ear!
To thee our Pœan softly sing,
Manitou! hear!"

The while she sang, into the white canoe,
In fragrant showers, with lavish hand, she threw
The rifled treasures of the floral plain.
Gemming the stream the maidens strew
Blossoms bright, of every hue,
Bediamonded with midnight dew,
And thus take up the strain—
"Mighty spirit! hear our prayer,
Thee we give these flowerets fair;
Guard our tribe with parent care,
Manitou! hear!"

They ceased; a matron then her part began,
And thus in mellow tones her accents ran—

"Brought from out our garnered store,
Fruit the childing autumn (17) bore,
We give thee here.
Oh! hold thy shield our braves before!
Manitou! hear!"

Whilst yet her lingering notes around remain,
Borne buoyant on the billows of the air,
Till, breaking on some hill, sweeps back again
On echo's reflux tide, the lessening strain,
In fainter, softer sighs.
E'er yet the sound's last ripple sinks and dies,
The matron chorus' deep, rich tones arise
In tuneful prayer—
"Mighty Spirit! hear our cry,
Watch us with a favoring eye;
Harvest rich in time supply,
Manitou! hear!"

'Tis silence now; forth from a cedar bower,
In robe of spectral white glides Lena on;
So still—so calm—you well might deem the power
Of music's spell had, in that mystic hour

Lured from the stars some phantom child of night,
Or moulded from the mellow beams that shone
Down from the pale, chaste moon, that form of light,
So noiseless steals she on, as scarce could one
Of mortal frame; nor gives of life a sign,
Save where her passing foot has dashed the dew
From those bright cups, the Hebe of the Sun,
Swart Night has filled; humbly to earth incline
The fragrant flowers their crowns of varied hue,
And worship as she passes, awe-oppressed.
Whilst plaintive sighing to the ear of night,
Matron and maid in symphony unite
To sing the gift of beauty, brightest, best—
"Brilliant though these flowers may be,
Bright these fruits as eye can see,
Yet lend thine ear;
A fairer far we grant to thee,
Manitou! hear!"

Whilst echoes yet the lingering strains prolong,
Matrons and maids alike take up the song,
And join in cadence deep the listening throng.

"Mighty spirit! to thy side
Lights this midnight moon thy bride,
Wafted on Niagara's tide!
Manitou hear!"

Soft fell the dirge, as Lena slowly drew
Nigh to the bank, and in the white canoe
Stepped light and gay,
Fast o'er the waves her swift bark flew;
And, smiling back her last adieu,
She gleamed away.

Away she glides—why dies upon the tongue
The whoop, half-breathed to the ear of night?
What can around those soaring sounds have flung
The chains of fright?(18)
Why bend they not their gaze where, wanton tost,
On heaving waves, floats Lena, loved and lost?
Why strain they thus the eager listening ear,
If not her paddle's fainter stroke to hear?
No crest of sparkling foam, that line of white,
That down the flashing current speeds its flight;

A birchen bark is shooting fleetly past,
One longing look the wondering crowd have cast;
Oronto's hand the paddle plies,
They hear each deep-drawn breath
Before each stroke as faster flies
His bounding bark to death.

On! on! brave sire! one moment more!
Check not thy fleet career!
Thy darling child is close before!
But death—death, too, is near!
Put forth thy strength, strain every nerve,
Be every sinew tried!
Strive, strive! her bark is on that curve
Where stops the shuddering tide,
As if from that dread leap 'twould swerve!
Strive, strive! thou'st gained her side!
Quick from those mutual eyes have shone
Deep looks of love; and ye are gone!
Whilst from the forest arches swell
The warriors' shouts—a stern farewell.

Tis o'er—kind night upon her tranquil breast
My fevered Fancy gently soothes to rest,
My thoughts no longer roam;
Dian sinks slowly in the West,
While from the star-gemmed sky
That calming spell falls silently,
Whose magic potency confest,
I rise, and seek my home.

WESTWARD, HO!

WRITTEN ON BOARD THE "INDIAN," JULY, 1859.

Why will ye, breezes, thus unkind,
Our homeward course delay!
Oh! haste afar! thou Western wind,
To Western wilds away.
But hither, from thy Orient bowers,
Fly fast thou favoring breeze!
Spring from thy couch of fragrant flowers,
And seek these Western seas!
For other breezes fail,
Or else are adverse found;
Oh! haste thee, fill our sail,
For we are homeward-bound!
Depart the Baltic's frozen strand!
Forsake Italia's plain!
From dread Sahara's burning sand
Hie to this Western main!

Leave off to toy with Persian girls,
To woo Circassian beauties;
Allow to rest their raven curls,
Thou'rt called to sterner duties!
For other breezes fail,
Or else are adverse found;
Then haste thee fill our sail,
For we are homeward-bound!

Oh! homeward-bound, for home, sweet home;
Oh! hearts and homes for ever
Loved spot! from thee, where'er I roam,
No power my heart shall sever!
Our bark fast-fleeting moments bring
Nearer the wished-for shore,
And fancied tones are echoing
Oh! welcome home once more!
Then let no breezes fail,
Let none be wanting found;
Haste all to fill our sail,
For we are homeward-bound!

THE MEETING.

It is the hour—it is the spot,
The shady walk—sequestered grot!
As gaily woos the wanton breeze
The trembling leaves of aspen trees,
As fast the sparkling fountains flow
As when we parted years ago.

And is that scene by me forgot?
Think'st thou that I remember not
Thy burning blush, thy stifled sigh,
The tear-drops glistening in thine eye?
Telling, what they'd no need to tell,
Thou'dst loved me long, and loved me well.

My form thy curious glances scan:
The boy has ripened to the man;

Yet still as strong, as fierce, the flame
Of that boy's love burns on the same;
Time has but heightened all the charms
I then clasped budding in my arms.

Again thine hand I fondly press,
Again receive thy shy caress;
Again my vows I whisper low,
Again thine eyes thy transport show;
Once more mine arms around thee twine,
And clasp thy throbbing heart to mine.

Thus, loved and loving, we'll grow old,
Nor in the grave shall love grow cold
But if love can outlive the tomb—
If when has passed the day of doom—
Our earthly loves again we see,
Our love shall last eternally.

EASTWARD, HO!

O'er crested billows, gliding free,
Our gay bark dances gallantly,
Fast speeding on her watery way;
A mimic avalanche of spray
Falls ceaseless from her rapid prow;
In fairy domes of crystal bright
Imprisoned zephyrs meet my sight,
Fast floating far away.
I dreamed, within those bubbles pent,
To many an absent one was sent
Sighs, that many a fair breast rent,
And flushed the brow.

Leaning her head upon her hands,
Far in the stern, a fair girl stands;

O'er her pale cheek, in fitful play,
Aurora-like faint blushes stray,
And come and go incessantly;
Strangers may gaze, she heeds them not,
Place, space, and time, alike forgot,
Her thoughts are far away,
And, homeward, towards the setting sun,
By love inspired, like light, have run,
Back to her loved—her absent one,
Across the sea.

And one is leaning by her side,
Who long, but all in vain, hath tried,
By merry tale, or jesting gay,
To lure from gloomy thoughts away,
His darling cousin's anxious mind;
And strives, and strives, but strives in vain
To ease her grief—assuage her pain.
Her frequent sighs betray
That far, far o'er the ocean's foam,
Love-winged, her wandering fancies roam,
To him, whom in her western home
She left behind.

TO A CANADIAN FRIEND.

ON HER RETURN HOME, OCTOBER, 1857.

A gleam of joy your presence brought,
A glimpse of home it gave;
A spot my eager fancy sought,
'Neath dark pines stretched in wild array,
Beyond the ocean, far away,
Beside Ontario's wave.

The bay's encircling arms enfold,
Unmoved by zephyr's sigh,
The throbbing lake, bedecked in gold,
And, with the varied shifting hues,
The sun's soft touches round diffuse,
Gay tints of autumn vie.

Doomed to no dreary exile here,
Yet, still each well-known name,
Like sweetest music, greets mine ear,
Alas! the strain in distance dies
Vainly I long the notes I prize
From silence to reclaim.

IMPROMPTU.

ON PRESENTING A BOUQUET OF WILD FLOWERS.

WHERE the wild rose a bower of the thicket made
With wreaths of white and red;
Where the blue-bell drooped in the hazel shade,
Like a mourner o'er the dead;
Where with oak, and beach, and rowan crowned
The rocks o'er "Ess na Lara" (19) frowned;
Where ferns their plumes were waving round,
These flowers my wandering footsteps found.

Where the primrose gleams through the long rank grass,
Like a star behind a cloud,
A moment I pause, as I swiftly pass,
To snatch it from its shroud.
These flowers may fade, their bloom decay,
Time may their fragrance waft away;
To-morrow may wither the rose of to-day;
But a leal heart's love will last for aye.

TO LOVE YOU FOR EVER.

To love you for ever, my doom is decreed,
Whether kindness or hate you display;
A slave to your wishes, a friend to your need,
With a zeal that must never decay.
Bright dawning on me you awakened my love,
Fancy painting you stolen away,
A spirit of light from the realms above,
To be loved here for ever and aye.

Each kind glance you gave then to me was as cheering
As to darkness the dawn of the day,
Or the queen of the night in splendor appearing,
Through the clouds that long shaded her ray.
But there lieth no life in the cold moonbeam
Each fair blossom to save from decay:
Without hope from your love, still smiling must seem
The chilled heart, loving ever and aye.

The dark pall of doubt has my heaven o'erclouded
Quite eclipsing the splendor of day;
Despair's gloomy mist from my longing eye shrouded,
My bright pole star's last quivering ray,
Gone darkling adrift on life's troubulous ocean,
Rudely rent from Hope's anchor away,
The wrecked heart, now rocked by each transient emotion,
Soon shall perish for ever and aye.

Hope whispers, "Through clouds brooding gloomily o'er you
Some faint beams from some planet still stray;
Ambition's proud course lies inviting before you,
May Fame's laurel await you! Away!
Your soul from life's battle may march out victorious,
And, striking her time-worn tent's decay,
Shall be wafted afar to those mansions glorious
Where the blest love for ever and aye!"

THE MAPLE WREATH.

Long, long may bask old England's shore
In golden fortune's smile!
Long, long the hardy sons she bore
Still love the dear old isle!
May links of love from England's plain,
From Scotland's blooming heather,
And Erin, form the living chain
That binds our lands together!
Love-welded 'cross the ocean wide,
Strong may it stretch for ever!
That Gordian knot, so closely tied,
No bright sword e'er should sever!
We need no friends, we fear no foes!
Fling terror to the wind!
While maple, thistle, shamrock, rose,
In friendship's wreath are twined.

But seek not ye those ties to break
That bind our land to you;

Dare not your guardian post forsake,
Drop not your sword so true.
Yet laurel-crowned Fame points out
What deeds our sires have wrought;
Rebellion's death, (20) invasion's rout,
The lesson well have taught,
That, prompt each loyal thought to feel,
Each foreign foe to quell,
Our hearts are fire, our swords are steel,
Our hands can wield them well!
And but ye dared our aid to slight, (21)
To pass our proffers by,
Ye'd found the maple in the fight
A wreath of victory.

We boast that good old Saxon blood
Runs redly in our veins;
The blood that tyranny withstood,
And England freed from chains.
We claim as sires the victor few
Of Cressy and Poictiers;

Our arms as strong, our steels as true,
Our hearts as void of fears.
And boast we, too, those stern old sires, (22)
The faithful and the free,
Who kindled up the slumbering fires
Of England's liberty.
And still at times we hear a tone
Of thunder from their graves,
Should Freedom's guards have drowsy grown—
"Rouse, Britons! be not slaves!"

If danger threaten in the broil,
That's menaced by the Gaul—
If foreign foot pollute your soil
We're with you one and all.
Then through our land the patriot call
Shall fast as lightning spread,
And echo from the hearts of all
In tones might rouse the dead.
"Each plough be in the furrow stayed,
Our crops unreaped may stand,

Fling down the axe, and grasp the blade,
And strike for fatherland!"
Oh, then, until we meet your foes,
Too slow the fastest wind,
Till maple, thistle, shamrock, rose,
In victory's wreath are twined.

THE STEEL-SHOD HOOF OF THE ROVING STEED.

The steel-shod hoof of the roving steed
Of the wandering Siou
The fire from its bonds of flint has freed,
O'er the prairie as he flew;
And high the wild flame rears its head,
Throws to the breeze its banner red,
And blasts the earth with (23) Spahi tread.
Before its march bloom blossoms bright,
Now flames have grasped each stem,
A moment more it greets the sight,
A coal bright blazing gem;
Then melt the flowers, and ashes white
Are left of them.

When the glances bright of beauty cold
To love have awaked the heart,

Through each vein the fervid fire is rolled
And the maddened pulses start;
And giant Love, who long hath slept,
To new-born life hath joyous leapt,
And doubt's cold bars to earth hath swept,
Like morning dews, hopes sparkling beam
With false delusive ray;
Then glow awhile with brighter gleam
'Neath Passion's fiery sway,
Then, evanescent as a dream,
They fade for aye.

YOUTH AND AGE.

Young minds will still be straying
Through Fancy's fertile plain;
Through groves of thought a Maying
They trip it to the strain
The frolic god is playing,
With Pleasure's wreath essaying
Time's current to restrain,
His rapid stream delaying
With young Love's floral rein.

But sager minds are crying
That Pleasure's flowers will fade,
In calm contempt, while eyeing
Each love-struck youth and maid,
Who, tender passion sighing,
On beds of flowers are lying
Embowered in Fancy's shade;
Nor deem cold eyes are spying
The bliss their love has made.

THE BUD JUST BURSTING.

The bud just bursting into flower
In bright and blooming May,
The rich and radiant morning hour,
That heralds coming day;
The youthful queen of beauty's bower,
Fit theme for minstrel's lay,
Are types of hopes, beneath whose power
Is laughed gay youth away.

The frost, that nips the blossom gay
With breath of wintry wind,
The clouds, that keep the radiant ray
In gloomy mists confined;
The plague, that beauty steals away,
Nor leaves a trace behind,
Are types of doubts, that Hope decay
When loved ones prove unkind.

The withered blossoms, shrunk and dry,
Both scent and color fled—
The dark and lowering wintry sky,
When summer gleams have sped—
The faded cheek and sunken eye,
When beauty's bloom is shed,
Are types of early joys that die
When guiding hopes are dead.

ADIEU.

Adieu! we must part, e'er again we may meet
Months, years, may have passed away,
And I from thy thoughts have flown, as fleet
As forms that o'er mirrors stray;
And have left an impression, as transient, as slight,
Imprinted at morning, forgotten at night.

Adieu! but believe me, though now we must sever—
Though far from thee now I must stray—
To lands beyond the wild wave, yet never
Thou'lt fade from my mind away!
Still of thee shall my fancy fond memories prize,
As the scent lingers on though the violet dies.

WOMAN'S SMILE.

Far o'er the ocean's slumbering wave,
Sans sail, sans helm, sans compass, go!
Step from the cliff that fierce tides lave
Firm on the floating mists below!
Let falsehood's self thy faith beguile,
But put no trust in woman's smile!

Pursue! like (24) the rainbow's bright glory,
Stealing from hill to hill;
'Twill lure thee, then vanish before thee,
Yet smile on thee distantly still:
Thou seekest gold, thou findest air,
While smiles still mock thy soul's despair!

THE CLAYMORE.

The sword my fathers bore
Hangs in my castle's hall;
Speaks of the past that old claymore,
From the old trophied wall.
When earth is swathed in snow,
And midnight fires burn low,
Then steal its whispers slow
The awe-struck fancy o'er;
As tells of frays,
Of other days,
My father's old claymore.

The hilt is dim with dust,
The studded belt is gone!
The trusty steel is red with rust
That once so brightly shone!
Notched is the blade, I ween,
That, flashing once so keen,
In battle's front was seen,

Our martial clan before,
While backward shrank
Each hostile rank
Where swept that bright claymore.

These phantoms of the past
Still back to memory stray;
And martial clans are gathering fast
In tartan's wild array:
Prompt at each chief's command
Ready is every band
To aid, with heart and hand,
The king their souls adore.
For Charley's right
They come to fight,
With Scotland's broad claymore.

Now front to front they stand,
Marshalled is every clan,
To try the question hand to hand—
To test it man to man.

Hark! to the pibroch's sound,
Upon the foes they bound,
Their chosen friends around;
The hostile ranks before,
While each one draws,
In Charley's cause,
His father's bright claymore.

And on, and on, they sweep
To mingle in the fray,
Beneath those clouds of war that keep
Concealed the orb of day;
Brave hands there wield the steel,
Brave lips the slogan peal,
Whose tones brave hearts shall feel,
Mindful of days before,
When with that might,
That born of right,
Far flashed the bright claymore

Their ranks are wildly tossing
Like waves of meeting tides,

While bayonet bright with broadsword crossing
The wavering fight decides;
These do not fear to die!
Those hold it scorn to fly!
"On!" is each chieftain's cry,
"On! on! advance once more!
On to the charge!
Cast off each targe,
And wield each red claymore!"

Now comes the twilight grey,
Sunk has the weary sun;
The pall of smoke has rolled away,
The work of death is done.
But he who fell that day,
The gallant and the gay,
Lifeless, yet lovely, lay
Where proud he trod before;
And in his hand
Still grasps his brand,
His ruddy dyed claymore.

'Twill gleam in fight no more!
Peaceful 'tis resting now!
Yet, still, when tempests hoarsely roar,
And forest giants bow—
When thunder loud is crashing,
When (25) levin-bolts are flashing,
And ocean waves are dashing
In foam upon the shore,
Then tells of frays
Of other days,
My father's old claymore.

FINIS.

NOTES.

Note 1.

"In days of old, long before the deep solitudes of the West were disturbed by white men, it was the custom of the Indian warriors to assemble at the cataract, and offer a human sacrifice to the Spirit of the Falls. The offering consisted of a white canoe, full of ripe fruits and blooming flowers, which was paddled over the terrible cliff by the fairest girl of the tribe who had just arrived at womanhood. The only daughter of a chief of the Senacas was chosen as an offering to the Spirit of Niagara. Her mother had been slain by a hostile tribe. Her father was the bravest among the warriors, and his stern brow seldom relaxed save to his blooming child. At length the day arrived; it faded into night as the festivity proceeded; then the moon arose and silvered the cloud of mist that rose from out the turmoil of Niagara; and now the white canoe, laden with its precious freight, glided from the bank, and swept out into the rapid. The young girl calmly steered her tiny bark towards the centre of the stream, while frantic yells and shouts arose from the forest. Suddenly another white canoe shot forth upon the stream, and, under the powerful impulse of the Seneca chief, flew like an arrow to destruction. It overtook the first; the eyes of father and child met in one last

gaze of love, and then they plunged together into eternity."—*The Falls of Niagara, a Complete Guide, &c.*

Note 2.

This is but a reflection of a sunset witnessed ten long years ago, which was then impressed on my mind in indeliable colors—chromolithographed on the memory—to be recalled from time to time in its original vividness.

Note 3.

Corbells are the projections from which the arches spring (in the old Gothic). So in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel,"

"The corbells were carved grotesque and grim."

Note 4.

"But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Thus grossly close it in," &c.—*Merchant of Venice.*

Note 5.

"I could see an immense torrent of water tearing headlong down from some great height, but had no idea of shape or situation, or anything but vague immensity."—*American Notes, by Charles Dickens.*

Note 6.

The calumet, or pipe of peace, was, and still is, an inseparable concomitant of all Indian councils. The bowl is made of stone, generally of a dull red color; the stem is about three feet long, and fantastically decorated.

Note 7.

The lake of Saratoga. "There is an Indian superstition attached to this lake, which probably had its source in its remarkable loneliness and tranquillity. The Mohawks believed that its stillness was sacred to the Great Spirit, and that if a human voice uttered a sound upon its waters the canoe of the offender would instantly sink."—*Our Summer Retreats, a Hand-book, &c.*

Note 8.

"Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or golden bowl be broken."—*Ecclesiastes*, xii., 6.

Note 9.

"But as the summer fruit decays,
So died he in those naked days."—*Longfellow.*

Note 10.

"Sulphurous and nitrous foam
They found, they mingled, and with subtle art
Concocted and adusted, they reduced
To blackest grain."—*Paradise Lost*, Book VI., 512.

Note 11.

"A sword of Spain, the ice-brooks temper."—*Othello.*

Note 12.

It has occurred to me that Sir W. Scott's

"As waves before the bark divide,
The crowd gave way before his stride,"

may have suggested this couplet.

Note 13.

The flower here alluded to grows in great abundance in the woods in the months of May and June. Its corolla is composed of three pure white petals. I am not acquainted with its botanical name; as children, we knew it as the death flower.

Note 14.

The smaller twigs of the sassifras, hemlock, or balsam, covered with a blanket, make a luxurious couch, as the author can vouch from personal experience on camping-out expeditions.

Note 15.

The rattlesnake is said to possess the basilisk power of luring its victim to destruction by the fixity of its gaze.

Note 16.

For the benefit of such of my readers as may not be versed in mythology, I may state that the snake-tressed Gorgons were fabled to turn to stone who ever looked on them. The one here alluded to is the head of Medusa, cut off by Perseus, and used by him for the confusion of his enemies, and the production of many wonderful petrifactions.

Note 17.

"The childing Autumn."—*Midsummer Night's Dream.*

Note 18.

Alluding to the jesses by which falcons were secured.

Note 19.

"Ess na Lara." Fall of the mare. A small waterfall in County Antrim.

Note 20.

When General Hull's invading force was driven over our frontier, shut up in Detroit, and compelled to surrender, the bulk of the victors were Canadian militia; and when Brook fell on the heights of Queenston, it was in the act of leading the York Volunteers to the charge. And the rebellion of 1838 showed that our loyal energy had not died out; the rising in the upper province was crushed by the militia, without the aid of a British soldier; and they aided materially in the lower.

Note 21.

Colonel Prince offered to raise 2,000 men for service in the Crimea, and the imperial government refused the offer.

Note 22.

It is almost superfluous to mention that I allude to the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers—

> "When the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang
> With the anthem of the free."

Note 23.

The Spahis were Turkish irregular cavalry, of whom, as of Attala, is was said that where their horse-hoofs trod the grass never grew.

Note 24.

The old story of the cup of gold, to be found where the rainbow touched the ground, is too well known to need repetition.

Note 25.

Levin-bolt—thunder-bolt. So Scott, in "Lay of the Last Minstrel,"

"Levin-brand"—"Levin-darting guns."